

Robinson's Builders Mart

Contractors' Newsletter

Ideas & Views

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HOW TO HIRE RELIABLE SUBCONTRACTORS FOR A PROJECT

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Starting a new construction business is challenging on the best of days. Hiring unreliable subcontractors can damage your reputation before you've even had a chance to earn it. What can you do to ensure that you're hiring reliable subcontractors for your first or next project?

Be incredibly selective.

If you're just starting out in the construction industry, then it might seem like you're scraping the bottom of the barrel when it comes to finding subcontractors. Don't let that be an excuse for choosing unreliable people to work with. There are good subcontractors everywhere. It might just take a little bit of extra time and searching to find them, especially if you don't have a reputation or word-of-mouth referral to help you make connections.

Regardless of the difficulty, you need to be incredibly selective when it comes to choosing subcontractors for your next project. Don't cut corners and just hire the first company that crosses your path.

Carry out a prequalification evaluation.

Your interview with a new subcontractor should start before you ever meet them face-to-face. Before you consider working with a company, have them fill out a prequalification evaluation. This can help weed out the less-reliable options and ensure that you're only considering the ones that will fit best with your company and mission.

Look for everything from information about their business to payment histories, previous projects, and past financial stability, just to name a few.

Networking is a valuable tool.

Networking is one of the most valuable tools in your arsenal. Word-of-mouth is just as effective as ever when it comes to finding the kind of contractors that you really want to work with. Form connections and build friendships with other professionals in your field.

When you're looking for new subcontractors, talk to your connections, and get their opinions. You'll get information from your industry peers that you'll never learn in an interview, evaluation, or assessment.

Don't forget to check licensing and bonding.

Hiring an unreliable subcontractor is going to make your job infinitely harder. With a good team behind you, it's easier to meet deadlines and manage expenses. Currently, only about 1/3 of projects manage to stay within their budget. Staying on track becomes even more challenging if an unprepared or irresponsible contractor creates liability issues for your team.

Ensure that the subcontractors you use are licensed, bonded, and insured in your state and the surrounding areas if you plan to work beyond the borders of your home state. This will reduce headaches and ensure compliance with the law. Plus, it guarantees you are working with trusted professionals who will take responsibility for jobsite errors.

Go the extra mile.

Finding reliable subcontractors is one thing, but keeping them is something entirely different. Subcontractors are incredibly flexible. If they're not being treated well in their current contract, they have the option to move on to greener pastures.

How do you build a strong relationship with your subcontractors? Treat them well. Go the extra mile. Let them know what they need to do, and ask for their input. Hold them accountable for their task and actions, and—perhaps most importantly—honor your agreements, and pay them on time and in full.

Communication is key.

Whether you're dealing with subcontractors or your own team, communication is vital to success. Letting your lines of communication break down is a recipe for disaster, especially if you're concerned about meeting deadlines or staying within your budget. Keep your door open, and manage your lines of communication.

Also, this goes both ways. Ensure you're working with people who will keep those lines of communication open. Don't work with a subcontractor who won't talk to you.

Finding and Hiring the Right Subcontractors

The construction industry is highly competitive. Take the time to be incredibly selective in your search for subcontractors, and don't cut corners. Setting up a prequalification evaluation can help weed out the less desirable options and help connect you with the perfect contractor for your job.

Once you've made the connection, it's a good idea to go the extra mile to help build your relationship with your team. It will take work, and it will be difficult—especially when you're just starting out—but taking the extra



steps to find and retain reliable subcontractors can mean the difference between success and failure in the construction industry.

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